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Menarche and Ayurveda; an critical review

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Abstract:

Adolescence is the prime period of each human being especially for the girls. It is the transition of girlhood to the womanhood and is marked by the onset of menstruation at – menarche. First menstrual bleeding – Menarche usually begins between the age of 9-15 years. Ayurveda marks menstruating female as Rajaswala and also states the Rajaswala Paricharya to be followed. In recent times this natural and womanhood phenomenon is looked upon by a sense of anxiety and worry owing to the problems associated with it. Early age of menarche, heavy bleeding, anemia, weakness, vertigo etc., are the common signs and symptoms seen in present scenario. Here the Ayurveda can be the guiding light in order to ease the condition and live a happy womanhood.

Keywords: Menarche, Rajaswala, womanhood

Introduction:

From infancy to the old age, there are various stages of life one encounters. These are the biological changes which are faced by all individuals. In adolescence stage whether it may be boy or girl, one has to face the major biological shift in one's mind and body. The onset of puberty in girls is marked by the verge of menstruation. It is termed as menarche. Menstruation is the process in female body in which there is discharge of blood and other materials from female genital organ – vagina, uterus on monthly basis. The age according to science is considered from 9 to 15 years. Here Ayurveda classics too mentions the age of menarche to be 12 years. *Acharya Sushruta* had explained the transition of *Bala Vaya* to *Rajaswala* with the symptoms as,

बालानाम अपिवयः परिणामात् शुकरस्य प्रदुर्भवो भवती ।

रोमराज्या अदयश्चा विषेशो नारिणाम् ॥

- Su.Su. 14/18

These refers to the development of secondary sexual characters. Manifestation of *Romraji* – pubic hairs, *Artav Darshan*, *Stana Garbhashaya Yoni Vruddhi* etc.

As females are bestowed with child bearing gift by the nature, in accordance to it the female body prepares itself for the pregnancy each month. These cycle is termed as menstruation. It involves the hormonal changes which brings about the changes in female body, and if not fertilized then the female egg is shaded from the uterus along with endometrium and blood through vagina. These cycle is divided in four phases as, menstruation, follicular phase, ovulation and luteal phase. In each phase a specific set of hormones play an important role.

In Ayurveda, the menstrual cycle is termed as *Rutuchakra*. It is sub divided in three phases as follows,

Raja Strava – menstrual flow phase – 3-5 days

Rutu Kala – follicular phase – 12-16 days

Rutu Vaytit Kala – post ovulatory proliferative phase – 9-13 days

In first phase of *Raja Strava*, the blood which is collected for whole month by *Artava Vimochini Dhamani* in *Garbhasya* which is expelled out by the action of *Apanavayu* through *Yonimukha*. In next phase of *Rutu Kala*, the follicular phase, as the name suggest it signifies the healthy breeding season and chance of conception are high. In next phase if there is no fertilization, then it is termed as *Rutu Vaytit Kala* – luteal phase. In this phase the uterus prepares itself for failed conception and commencement of next phase i.e. *Raja Strava*. Here both the *Tridosha* and *Dahtu* of female body plays an important role in this cycle. The *Vata Dosha* – *Apana Vayu* is primly responsible for the optimum functioning of the female genitals and processes related to it. The *Pitta Dosha* is responsible for digestion of food and there by preparation of *Rasa Dhatu* which is the base of female reproductive cycle. And the formed *Rasa Dhatu* resembles *Kapha Dosha* in properties – *Guna*.

In today's pace of life, young girls which are on verge of menstruation and experience their first cycle has to face issues related to menarche. The problems like early onset of menstruation, painful periods, heavy bleeding, amenorrhea, premenstrual syndrome, mood swings, weakness, vertigo etc. are been encountered by majority of the young girls. Factors responsible for this condition can be listed as,

- Faulty food habits
- Child obesity
- Low physical activity and increased use of smart gadgets causing hormonal imbalance
- Social an emotional pressure
- Self-medication
- Increasing stress and anxiety

- Improper day to day routine – *Dinacharya*

The biological change in female body at the time of menarche is due to change in hormonal profile of the females. There are certain hormones of hypothalamus pituitary ovarian axis which are responsible for healthy onset can commencement of menstruation. Any difference in this axis due to above mentioned factors affects the menstruation and thus results in issues during menarche. While if we go through the causative factors, based on the principles of Ayurveda, they are the vitiating *Hetu* for *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*.

Dosha Dushti –

Vata Dosha – Apana Dushti

Pitta Dosha – Pancha Pitta Dushti

Kapha Dosha Dushti

Datu Dushti –

Rasa Dhatu – Artava Upadhatu Dushti

Rata Dhatu

Meda Dhatu

Majja Dhatu

Ayurveda has the holistic approach towards this problem. The corrective measures according to the principles of Ayurveda are as follows,

Ahara– diet

- Taking timely diet
- Having fresh and wholesome diet
- Eating fresh warm food without doing any other work
- Diet according to ones *Prakruti* and *Rutu*
- Minimum use of fast food and acidic beverages like tea and coffee

Dinacharya– daily routine

One should follow the healthy routine set according to the principles of Ayurveda. Maintaining hygiene, taking food at proper time, adequate physical activity, timely sleep and other factors in one's routine helps to maintain sound mind and body.

Vyayama – physical exercise

It is of prime importance to inculcate exercise in ones day to day routine. Various forms of Yoga and Pranayama are proved to be beneficial in maintaining natural hormonal levels in body.

Aushadhi– medications in form of Rasayana

These medications can be used on day to day basis as there are categorized under *Rasayana*.

- *Chandraprabha Vati*
- *Shatavari*

- *Rason*
- *Draksha*
- *Methika*
- *Sahtpushpa*
- *Pushyanog Churna*
- *Dhatriloha*
- *Navayasaloha*
- *Ashokarishta*
- *Dashamoorarishta*

Inference:

Menarche is the prime stage in life of all females. This stage introduces the girl to the womanhood. Due to unhealthy practices in today's world one has to face the emerging issues related to the menarche. If we go through the factors responsible for it and if we follow the *Ayurvedic* approach of holistic lifestyle we can address this emerging issue.

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